

RESOLUTION OF THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

DETERMINATIONS AND FINDINGS RELATIVE TO THE CONDITION OF
THE CAMPUS HIGH SCHOOL URBAN RENEWAL AREA AND THE
CLEARANCE AREA LOCATED THEREIN, PROJECT NO. MASS. R-129

WHEREAS, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority"), is a public body, politic and corporate, duly organized and existing under Chapter 121B of the Massachusetts General Laws (Ter.Ed.), as amended, within the City of Boston, Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has undertaken and conducted surveys, studies, and inspections of an area within the City of Boston known and referred to as the Campus High School Urban Renewal Area and described in the Exhibit "A" attached hereto and made apart hereof (hereinafter called the "Project Area"), which Project Area includes a Clearance Area as shown on Map 6 of an application for Loan and Grant, which application was presented to the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has prepared an Urban Renewal Plan for the Project Area and proposes to undertake an urban renewal project therein; and

WHEREAS, there was presented to this meeting of the Authority the Project Area Report set forth in Code No. R-212 of the Part I: Final Project Report for the Campus High School Urban Renewal Project, which report describes the surveys and studies undertaken in the Project Area, the criteria used to determine the condition of structures and the character, physical conditions and uses of land and structures in the Project Area; and

WHEREAS, with the consent of the Division of Urban Renewal of the State Department of Community Affairs and the City of Boston acting by its Mayor with the authorization of the City Council, and with the approval of the Department of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to a temporary loan contract under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, the Authority, as provided by law, prior to the completion and approval of the Urban Renewal Plan for the Project Area has conducted so called "early land acquisition activities" in the Project Area by acquiring land in the Project Area and conducting relocation activities; the Authority has held a public hearing after due and proper notice, has received and heard extensive evidence, data, exhibits, views and opinions and has in a resolution adopted August 11, 1966 made

certain findings and conclusions concerning the buildings and conditions within said Project Area; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has considered and reviewed the aforementioned Project Area Report;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Boston Redevelopment Authority, acting under and pursuant to its powers under the provisions of Chapter 121B, as amended, and any other powers thereunto enabling, does hereby determine and find the following particular facts:

A. As to the Project Area

1. Building Conditions

Of the 492 buildings in the Project Area, 320 (65%) are dwellings. Of those 492 buildings, 429 (87%) have deficiencies and 332 (67%) are structurally substandard to a degree requiring clearance as defined under applicable Federal regulations.

2. Tax Foreclosures

Of the 91.5 acres of land in the Project Area exclusive of streets and other rights-of-way, 14.6 acres (16.0%) are now owned by the City of Boston because they have been taken and foreclosed for non-payment of taxes.

3. Building Demolitions

Since 1931, approximately 415 buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions probably will not be replaced.

4. Vacant, Abandoned and Condemned Buildings

Approximately 19 percent of the buildings in the Project Area are vacant and abandoned. Most of these buildings are poorly maintained or have been destroyed by vandals, and consequently they are unsafe and hazardous. In addition, major fires have gutted other buildings, further blighting the neighborhood. A total of 31 buildings in the Project Area (6.0% of all buildings) have been inspected and condemned by the City of Boston Building Department or the Office of Neighborhood Improvement or have been surveyed by Redevelopment Authority staff and found to be unsafe and dangerous and/or unfit for human habitation.

5. Overcrowding and Improper Location of Structures on Land

Many residential and non-residential structures do not meet standards set by the City's zoning ordinances. Lot areas and widths, usable open space, and front, side, and rear yard requirements are generally below code standards. Many residential buildings cover 60% to 80% of their lot areas. In addition, many residential buildings are located on interior lots, in the rear of parcels behind other structures, or otherwise have restricted access, which is a serious safety hazard in case of fire or other emergency.

6. Obsolete Buildings Unsuitable for Contemporary Uses

Many of the retail and industrial facilities were constructed more than sixty years ago and are now functionally obsolete. The type of construction, mechanical equipment, general layout, and loading and servicing arrangements lack adaptability to contemporary industrial and retail requirements.

The majority of the nonresidential structures in the Project Area lack adequate customer and employee parking and off-street loading and delivery facilities. Moreover, typically these nonresidential structures are placed on the land so as to prevent their effectively using the open space that does exist for such parking, loading and deliveries.

7. Incompatible Land Uses, Structures in Mixed Use, and Adverse Influences from Noise, Smoke or Fumes

A number of heavy commercial, industrial and mixed-use structures have encroached upon the residential sections of the Project Area. These uses generate truck traffic, noise, dirt and unsightliness which have contributed to the deterioration and spread of blight in this area. Inadequate customer and employee parking, as well as the lack of off-street loading facilities, have had an adverse effect.

Many structures in mixed residential-commercial use are found in the Project Area, particularly along the major streets. The blighting influence of such structures is illustrated by the fact that many of them are now abandoned, vacant and unmaintained.

8. Unsafe, Congested, Poorly Designed and Otherwise Deficient Streets

The majority of the existing streets are substandard in condition. Approximately three quarters of the streets have surfaces rated as poor or very poor, and nearly 98% of the sidewalks are similarly rated. Thirty percent of the street lighting has been found to be deficient (poor to very poor or broken) and forty-one percent of the lighting fixtures are over 55 years in age.

Few streets in the area have roadways wide enough for major traffic volumes, and there are a number of complex intersections, few continuous streets, and an inadequate system of collector streets. Many streets are operating at or near capacity. Major intersections are chronically congested under present conditions, resulting in a tendency for motorists to use secondary streets or even local streets to circumvent problem locations along arterials.

Dudley Street, a major crosstown street, is severely congested and operating at capacity (10,000 vehicles per day). The heavy use of this street by buses, together with the on-street parking and the lack of adequate curb loading stations, contribute to the problem of congestion. The Roxbury Crossing area also is a major problem area; congestion and poor alignment of the streets entering Roxbury Crossing limit the capacity of this intersection.

9. Inadequate Public Facilities Contributing to Unsatisfactory Living Conditions or Economic Decline

a. Schools

A study of the public schools in the City of Boston prepared by Harvard University indicated that the four elementary schools in the Project Area are obsolete and in deteriorating condition and recommended that they be abandoned. All of the schools are of Type IV construction (wood frame, floors and roof) and are hazardous to the safety of their occupants.

The William Bacon School was built in 1897 and suffers from age and lack of maintenance. Exterior walls are cracked; deteriorating brickwork and crumbling mortar in the basement permit water seepage; the upper floors show evidence of leakage; and walls and ceilings are cracked and lack paint. In addition, basement toilet rooms are unsanitary and illumination is substandard.

The Dillaway School, built in 1882, is located in a blighted neighborhood next to elevated tracks and is surrounded by heavy traffic. Foundations and walls show evidence of leakage, toilet facilities are unsanitary, and lighting is inadequate. The hand-fired coal boilers are controlled by an obsolete control system.

The Dudley School, built in 1874, is located on a site characterized by heavy traffic along its front, limited land area, and inadequate outdoor play space. Exterior walls are cracked, causing interior leakage; classrooms are dark; ventilation is substandard; and basement toilets are unsanitary.

The Asa Gray School was built in 1877 and was abandoned as a public school in 1967. The building presently is vacant; is in general disrepair; walls and ceilings show evidence of leakage; the exterior needs repointing; lighting is substandard, resulting in dark and hazardous corridors and stairs; and basement toilet facilities are unhealthy.

b. Parks and Recreation

None of the public parks in the project area is usable by the area's residents. The Madison Park is in dilapidated condition, and is hazardous, and entirely inadequate for recreational purposes. Lack of maintenance and broken glass characterize much of this park area. The smaller Vernon Street Park area is unmaintained and is closed much of the year. The King Street Park Area has no equipment and is in a very dilapidated condition and without equipment. A fourth recreational area, formerly a school site and playground on Bartlett Street, is likewise unusable because of its deterioration.

c. Municipal Buildings

Police Station No. 10 at Roxbury Crossing, built in the 1870's, and the Roxbury Municipal Court, remodeled from an old school in 1901, are both functionally obsolete and in poor repair. These two facilities are scheduled for replacement by a consolidated police station and court building to be located in the proposed Civic Center under construction at Dudley Square under the provisions of the Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan.

d. Sewerage and Water

Most of the area above Linden Park Street is served by separate sanitary and storm drainage systems, but below Linden Park Street these systems are combined. Most of the mains are over 60 years of age. Storm overflows in the Old Stony Brook Conduit contain some sewerage discharge and contribute substantially to the pollution of the nearby Fens Pond and Charles River Basin.

A large percentage of water mains 16" and larger were laid prior to 1900 and have lost more than 50% of their original carrying capacity. A 24" main on Roxbury-Dudley Streets is over 100 years old (1868) and, studies disclose, is badly tuberculated. It is symptomatic of the poor condition of these facilities that eight main failures have been reported in the area between 1954 and 1962.

B. As to the Clearance Area

1. Building Conditions

Of the 365 buildings in the Area, 333 (91%) have deficiencies and 249 (68%) are structurally substandard to a degree requiring clearance as defined under applicable Federal regulations.

Approximately two-thirds (225 or 62%) of those 365 buildings are dwellings.

2. Tax Foreclosures

Of the 72.7 acres of land in the Area exclusive of streets and other rights-of-way, 14.2 acres (19.5%) now are owned by the City of Boston because they have been foreclosed for non-payment of taxes.

3. Building Demolitions

Since 1931, approximately 405 buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions probably will not be replaced.

4. Other Deficiencies

The Clearance Area contains a large proportion of the obsolete, deteriorating and abandoned buildings and overcrowded parcels referred to hereinbefore in paragraphs 4 through 6 of section A of this Resolution. Similarly, the incompatible uses, noise, smoke, fumes, deficient streets and inadequate public facilities found in the Project Area generally (see paragraphs 7-9 of said section A) also characterize the Clearance Area.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Authority, acting under and pursuant to its powers as aforesaid, does hereby find and determine as follows:

(1) That the Project Area is a decadent area in that it is an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare and sound growth of the Boston community because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, obsolete, and in need of major maintenance and repair, because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold for non-payment of taxes or upon the foreclosure of mortgages, and because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and, under existing conditions, probably will not be replaced;

(2) That the Project Area is a substandard area, wherein dwellings predominate, which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements or design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, and a combination of these factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, welfare and sound growth of the Boston community;

(3) That the Project Area is a blighted, deteriorated, and deteriorating area;

(4) That the Clearance Area is a decadent and substandard area for the same reasons as those set forth in, respectively, (1) and (2) above;

(5) That the Clearance Area is a blighted, deteriorated, and deteriorating area; and

(6) That the Authority has prepared an urban renewal plan for the Project Area, which plan will include action with respect to the Clearance Area.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby affirms certain findings and conclusions concerning the buildings and conditions within that project area in a resolution adopted on August 11, 1966;

AND FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Authority is authorized to publish a notice of the findings and determinations adopted herein in a public newspaper of general circulation.

EXHIBIT "A"

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

CAMPUS HIGH SCHOOL URBAN RENEWAL AREA

Beginning at the intersection of the southerly sideline of Sterling Street and the easterly sideline of Warwick Street;

Thence running southeasterly along the southerly sideline of Sterling Street extended to the easterly sideline of Shawmut Avenue;

Thence turning and running southwesterly along the easterly sideline of Shawmut Avenue extended to the southerly sideline of Roxbury Street;

Thence turning and running southeasterly and northeasterly along the southerly sideline of Roxbury Street to the westerly sideline of Washington Street;

Thence turning and running southwesterly along the westerly sideline of Washington Street to the northerly sideline of Bartlett Street;

Thence turning and running northwesterly along the northerly sideline of Bartlett Street extended to the southerly sideline of Dudley Street extended to the southerly sideline of Roxbury Street;

Thence turning and running westerly along the southerly sideline of Roxbury Street extended to the midline of Columbus Avenue;

Thence turning and running due north to the westerly sideline of Columbus Avenue and thence along the westerly sideline of Columbus Avenue extended to the midline of the right-of-way of the mainline of the Penn-Central Railroad;

Thence turning and running northeasterly along the midline of the Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way to the extended northerly sideline of Ruggles Street;

Thence turning and running southeasterly along the northerly sideline of Ruggles Street extended to the easterly sideline of Columbus Avenue;

Thence turning and running northeasterly along the easterly sideline of Columbus Avenue to the westerly sideline of Weston Street;

Thence turning and running southeasterly along the westerly sideline of Weston Street extended to the easterly sideline of Cabot Street;

Thence turning and running northeasterly along the easterly sideline of Cabot Street to the southerly sideline of Cabot Place;

Thence turning and running southeasterly along the southerly sideline of Cabot Place extended to the easterly sideline of Warwick Street;

Thence turning and running northeasterly along the easterly sideline of Warwick Street to the point of beginning.